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The Last Chronicle of Barset

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

With Illustrations by G.H Thomas

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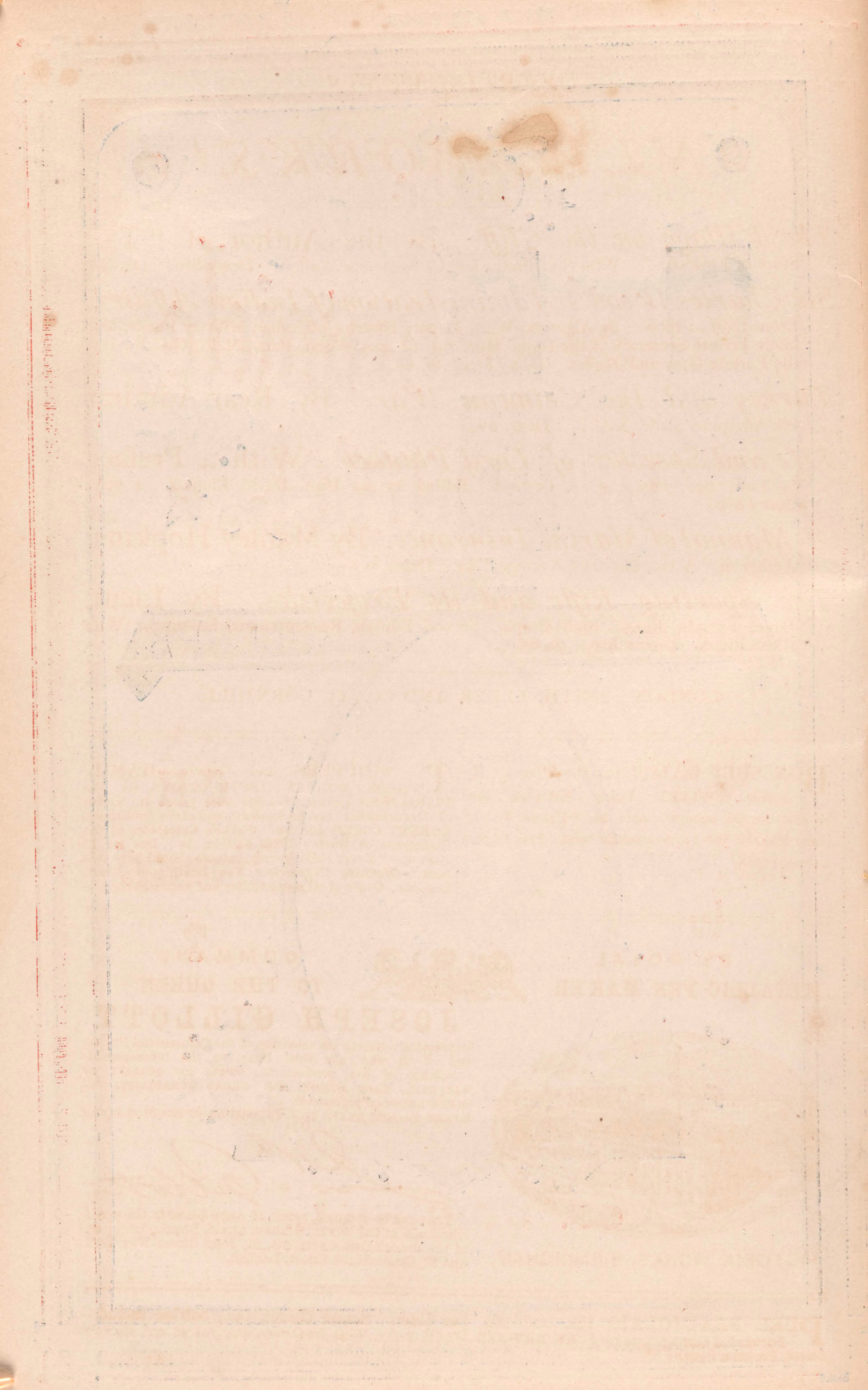

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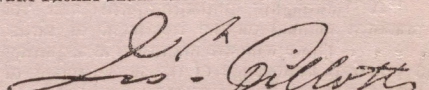

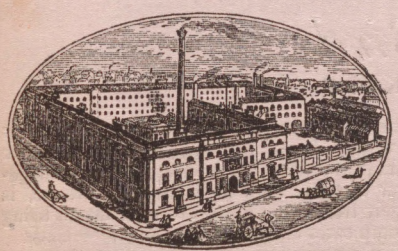

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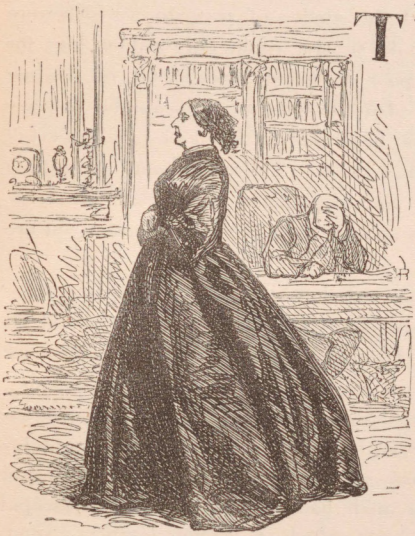
LILY WISHES THAT THEY MIGHT SWEAR TO BE BROTHER AND SISTER.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MRS. PROUDIE SENDS FOR HER LAWYER.



THERE was great dismay in Barchester Palace after the visit paid to the bishop and Mrs. Proudie by that terrible clerical offender, Mr. Crawley. It will be remembered, perhaps, how he had defied the bishop with spoken words, and how he had defied the bishop's wife by speaking no words to her. For the moment, no doubt, Mr. Crawley had the best of it. Mrs. Proudie acknowledged to herself that this was the case; but as she was a woman who had never yet succumbed to an enemy, who had never,—if on such an occasion I may be allowed to use a schoolboy's slang,—taken a licking from any one, it was not likely that Mr. Crawley would be long allowed to enjoy his triumph in peace. It would be odd if all the weight of the palace would not be able to silence a wretch of a perpetual curate who had already been committed to take his trial for thieving;—and Mrs. Proudie was determined that all the weight of the palace should be used. As for the bishop, though he was not as angry as his wife, he was quite as unhappy, and therefore quite as hostile to Mr. Crawley; and was fully conscious that there could be no peace for him now until Mr. Crawley should be crushed. If only the assizes would come at once, and get him condemned out of the way, what a blessed thing it would be! But unluckily it still wanted three months to the assizes, and during those three months Mr. Crawley would be at large and subject only to episcopal authority. During that time he could not be silenced by the arm of the civil law. His wife was not long in expressing her opinion after Mr. Crawley had left the palace. "You

must proceed against him in the Court of Arches,—and that at once," said Mrs. Proudie. "You can do that, of course? I know that it will be expensive. Of course it will be expensive. I suppose it may cost us some hundreds of pounds; but duty is duty, my lord, and in such a case as this your duty as a bishop is paramount."

The poor bishop knew that it was useless to explain to her the various mistakes which she made,—which she was ever making,—as to the extent of his powers and the modes of procedure which were open to him. When he would do so she would only rail at him for being lukewarm in his office, poor in spirit, and afraid of dealing roundly with those below him. On the present occasion he did say a word, but she would not even hear him to the end. "Don't tell me about rural deans, as if I didn't know. The rural dean has nothing to do with such a case. The man has been committed for trial. Send for Mr. Chadwick at once, and let steps be taken before you are an hour older."

"But, my dear, Mr. Chadwick can do nothing."

"Then I will see Mr. Chadwick." And in her anger she did sit down and write a note to Mr. Chadwick, begging him to come over to her at the palace.

Mr. Chadwick was a lawyer, living in Barchester, who earned his bread from ecclesiastical business. His father, and his uncle, and his grandfather and granduncles, had all been concerned in the affairs of the diocese of Barchester. His uncle had been bailiff to the episcopal estates, or steward as he had been called, in Bishop Grantly's time, and still contrived to draw his income in some shape from the property of the see. The nephew had also been the legal assistant of the bishop in his latter days, and had been continued in that position by Bishop Proudie, not from love, but from expediency. Mr. John Chadwick was one of those gentlemen, two or three of whom are to be seen in connection with every see,—who seem to be hybrids—half-lay, half-cleric. They dress like clergymen, and affect that mixture of clerical solemnity and clerical waggishness which is generally to be found among minor canons and vicar chorals of a cathedral. They live, or at least have their offices, half in the Close and half out of it,—dwelling as it were just on the borders of holy orders. They always wear white neck-handkerchiefs and black gloves; and would be altogether clerical in their appearance, were it not that as regards the outward man they impinge somewhat on the characteristics of the undertaker. They savour of the church, but the savour is of the church's exterior. Any stranger thrown into chance contact with one

of them would, from instinct, begin to talk of things ecclesiastical without any reference to things theological or things religious. They are always most worthy men, much respected in the society of the Close, and I never heard of one of them whose wife was not comfortable or whose children were left without provision.

Such a one was Mr. John Chadwick, and as it was a portion of his duties to accompany the bishop to consecrations and ordinations, he knew Dr. Proudie very well. Having been brought up, as it were, under the very wing of Bishop Grantly, it could not well be that he should love Bishop Grantly's successor. The old bishop and the new bishop had been so different that no man could like, or even esteem, them both. But Mr. Chadwick was a prudent man, who knew well the source from which he earned his bread, and he had never quarrelled with Bishop Proudie. He knew Mrs. Proudie also,—of necessity,—and when I say of him that he had hitherto avoided any open quarrel with her, it will I think be allowed that he was a man of prudence and sagacity.

But he had sometimes been sorely tried, and he felt when he got her note that he was now about to encounter a very sore trial. He muttered something which might have been taken for an oath, were it not that the outward signs of the man gave warranty that no oath could proceed from such a one. Then he wrote a short note presenting his compliments to Mrs. Proudie, and saying that he would call at the palace at eleven o'clock on the following morning.

But, in the meantime, Mrs. Proudie, who could not be silent on the subject for a moment, did learn something of the truth from her husband. The information did not come to her in the way of instruction, but was teased out of the unfortunate man. "I know that you can proceed against him in the Court of Arches, under the 'Church Discipline Act,'" she said.

"No, my dear; no;" said the bishop, shaking his head in his misery.

"Or in the Consistorial Court. It's all the same thing."

"There must be an inquiry first,—by his brother clergy. There must indeed. It's the only way of proceeding."

"But there has been an inquiry, and he has been committed."

"That doesn't signify, my dear. That's the Civil Law."

"And if the Civil Law condemns him, and locks him up in prison;—as it most certainly will do?"

"But it hasn't done so yet, my dear. I really think that as it has gone so far, it will be best to leave it as it is till he has taken his trial."

"What; leave him there after what occurred this morning in this palace?" The palace with Mrs. Proudie was always a palace, and never a house. "No; no; ten thousand times, no. Are you not aware that he insulted you, and grossly, most grossly insulted me? I was never treated with such insolence by any clergyman before, since I first came to this palace;—never, never. And we know the man to be a thief;—we absolutely know it. Think, my lord, of the souls of his people!"

"Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear," said the bishop.

"Why do you fret yourself in that way?"

"Because you will get me into trouble. I tell you the only thing to be done is to issue a commission with the rural dean at the head of it."

"Then issue a commission."

"And they will take three months."

"Why should they take three months? Why should they take more than three days,—or three hours. It is all plain sailing."

"These things are never plain sailing, my dear. When a bishop has to oppose any of his clergy, it is always made as difficult as possible."

"More shame for them who make it so."

"But it is so. If I were to take legal proceedings against him, it would cost,—oh, dear,—more than a thousand pounds, I should say."

"If it costs two, you must do it." Mrs. Proudie's anger was still very hot, or she would not have spoken of an unremunerative outlay of money in such language as that.

In this manner she did come to understand, before the arrival of Mr. Chadwick, that her husband could take no legal steps towards silencing Mr. Crawley until a commission of clergymen had been appointed to inquire into the matter, and that that commission should be headed by the rural dean within the limits of whose rural deanery the parish of Hogglestock was situated, or by some beneficed parochial clergyman of repute in the neighbourhood. Now the rural dean was Dr. Tempest of Silverbridge,—who had held that position before the coming of Dr. Proudie to the diocese; and there had grown up in the bosom of Mrs. Proudie a strong feeling that undue mercy had been shown to Mr. Crawley by the magistrates of Silverbridge, of whom Dr. Tempest had been one. "These magistrates had taken bail for his appearance at the assizes, instead of committing him to prison at once,—as they were bound to do, when such an offence as that had been committed by a clergyman. But, no;—even though there was a clergyman

among them, they had thought nothing of the souls of the poor people!" In such language Mrs. Proudie had spoken of the affair at Silverbridge, and having once committed herself to such an opinion, of course she thought that Dr. Tempest would go through fire and water,—would omit no stretch of what little judicial power might be committed to his hands,—with the view of opposing his bishop and maintaining the culprit in his position. "In such a case as this, can not you name an acting rural dean yourself? Dr. Tempest, you know, is very old." "No, my dear; no; I cannot." "You can ask Mr. Chadwick, at any rate, and then you could name Mr. Thumble." "But Mr. Thumble doesn't even hold a living in the diocese. Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear!" And so the matter rested until Mr. Chadwick came.

Mrs. Proudie had no doubt intended to have Mr. Chadwick all to herself,—at any rate so to encounter him in the first instance. But having been at length convinced that the inquiry by the rural dean was really necessary as a preliminary, and having also slept upon the question of expenditure, she gave directions that the lawyer should be shown into the bishop's study, and she took care to be absent at the moment of his arrival. Of course she did not intend that Mr. Chadwick should leave the palace without having heard what she had to say, but she thought that it would be well that he should be made to conceive that though the summons had been written by her, it had really been intended on the part of the bishop. "Mr. Chadwick will be with you at eleven, bishop," she said, as she got up from the breakfast-table, at which she left his lordship with two of his daughters and with a married son-in-law, a clergyman who was staying in the house. "Very well, my dear," said the bishop, with a smile,—for he was anxious not to betray any vexation at his wife's interference before his daughters or the Rev. Mr. Tickler. But he understood it all. Mr. Chadwick had been sent for with reference to Mr. Crawley, and he was driven,—absolutely driven, to propose to his lawyer that this commission of inquiry should be issued.

Punctually at eleven Mr. Chadwick came, wearing a very long face as he entered the palace door,—for he felt that he would in all probability be now compelled to quarrel with Mrs. Proudie. Much he could bear, but there was a limit to his endurance. She had never absolutely sent for him before, though she had often interfered with him. "I shall have to tell her a bit of my mind," he said, as he stepped across the Close, habited in his best suit of black, with most exact white cravat, and yet looking not quite like a clergyman,—with some touch of the undertaker in his gait. When he found that he was

shown into the bishop's room, and that the bishop was there,—and the bishop only,—his mind was relieved. It would have been better that the bishop should have written himself, or that the chaplain should have written in his lordship's name; that, however, was a trifle.

But the bishop did not know what to say to him. If he intended to direct an inquiry to be made by the rural dean, it would be by no means becoming that he should consult Mr. Chadwick as to doing so. It might be well, or if not well at any rate not improper, that he should make the application to Dr. Tempest through Mr. Chadwick; but in that case he must give the order at once, and he still wished to avoid it if it were possible. Since he had been in the diocese no case so grave as this had been pushed upon him. The intervention of the rural dean in an ordinary way he had used,—had been made to use,—more than once, by his wife. A vicar had been absent a little too long from one parish, and there had been rumours about brandy-and-water in another. Once he had been very nearly in deep water because Mrs. Proudie had taken it in dudgeon that a certain young rector, who had been left a widower, had a very pretty governess for his children; and there had been that case, sadly notorious in the diocese at the time, of our excellent friend Mr. Robarts of Framley, when the bailiffs were in his house because he couldn't pay his debts,—or rather, the debts of his friend for whom he had signed bills. But in all these cases some good fortune had intervened, and he had been saved from the terrible necessity of any ulterior process. But now,—now he was being driven beyond himself, and all to no purpose. If Mrs. Proudie would only wait three months the civil law would do it all for him. But here was Mr. Chadwick in the room, and he knew that it would be useless for him to attempt to talk to Mr. Chadwick about other matters, and so dismiss him. The wife of his bosom would be down upon them before Chadwick could be out of the room.

"H—m—ha. How d'ye do, Mr. Chadwick—won't you sit down?" Mr. Chadwick thanked his lordship, and sat down. "It's very cold, isn't it, Mr. Chadwick?"

"A hard frost, my lord, but a beautiful day."

"Won't you come near the fire?" The bishop knew that Mrs. Proudie was on the road, and had an eye to the proper strategical position of his forces. Mrs. Proudie would certainly take up her position in a certain chair from whence the light enabled her to rake her husband thoroughly. What advantage she might have from this he could not prevent;—but he could so place Mr. Chadwick, that the lawyer should be more within the reach of his eye than that of his wife.

So the bishop pointed to an arm-chair opposite to himself and near the fire, and Mr. Chadwick seated himself accordingly.

"This is a very sad affair about Mr. Crawley," said the bishop.

"Very sad indeed," said the lawyer. "I never pitied a man so much in my life, my lord."

This was not exactly the line which the bishop was desirous of taking. "Of course he is to be pitied;—of course he is. But from all I hear, Mr. Chadwick, I am afraid,—I am afraid we must not acquit him."

"As to that, my lord, he has to stand his trial, of course."

"But, you see, Mr. Chadwick, regarding him as a beneficed clergyman,—with a cure of souls,—the question is whether I should be justified in leaving him where he is till his trial shall come on."

"Of course your lordship knows best about that, but——"

"I know there is a difficulty. I know that. But I am inclined to think that in the interests of the parish I am bound to issue a commission of inquiry."

"I believe your lordship has attempted to silence him, and that he has refused to comply."

"I thought it better for everybody's sake,—especially for his own, that he should for a while be relieved from his duties; but he is an obstinate man, a very obstinate man. I made the attempt with all consideration for his feelings."

"He is hard put to it, my lord. I know the man and his pride. The dean has spoken of him to me more than once, and nobody knows him so well as the dean. If I might venture to offer an opinion——"

"Good morning, Mr. Chadwick," said Mrs. Proudie, coming into the room and taking her accustomed seat. "No thank you, no; I will stay away from the fire, if you please. His lordship has spoken to you no doubt about this unfortunate, wretched man?"

"We are speaking of him now, my dear."

"Something must of course be done to put a stop to the crying disgrace of having such a man preaching from a pulpit in this diocese. When I think of the souls of the people in that poor village, my hair literally stands on end. And then he is disobedient!"

"That is the worst of it," said the bishop. "It would have been so much better for himself if he would have allowed me to provide quietly for the services till the trial be over."

"I could have told you, my lord, that he would not do that, from what I knew of him," said Mr. Chadwick.

"But he must do it," said Mrs. Proudie. "He must be made to do it."

"His lordship will find it difficult," said Mr. Chadwick.

"I can issue a commission, you know, to the rural dean," said the bishop mildly.

"Yes, you can do that. And Dr. Tempest in two months' time will have named his assessors——"

"Dr. Tempest must not name them; the bishop must name them," said Mrs. Proudie.

"It is customary to leave that to the rural dean," said Mr. Chadwick. "The bishop no doubt can object to any one named."

"And can specially select any clergyman he pleases from the archdeaconry," said the bishop. "I have known it done."

"The rural dean in such case has probably been an old man, and not active," said the lawyer.

"And Dr. Tempest is a very old man," said Mrs. Proudie, "and in such a matter not at all trustworthy. He was one of the magistrates who took bail."

"His lordship could hardly set him aside," said the lawyer. "At any rate I would not recommend him to try. I think you might suggest a commission of five, and propose two of the number yourself. I do not think that in such a case Dr. Tempest would raise any question."

At last it was settled in this way. Mr. Chadwick was to prepare a letter to Dr. Tempest, for the bishop's signature, in which the doctor should be requested, as the rural dean to whom Mr. Crawley was subject, to hold a commission of five to inquire into Mr. Crawley's conduct. The letter was to explain to Dr. Tempest that the bishop, moved by his solicitude for the souls of the people of Hogglestock, had endeavoured, "in a friendly way," to induce Mr. Crawley to desist from his ministrations; but that having failed through Mr. Crawley's obstinacy, he had no alternative but to proceed in this way. "You had better say that his lordship, as bishop of the diocese, can take no heed of the coming trial," said Mrs. Proudie. "I think his lordship had better say nothing at all about the trial," said Mr. Chadwick. "I think that will be best," said the bishop.

"But if they report against him," said Mr. Chadwick, "you can only then proceed in the ecclesiastical court,—at your own expense."

"He'll hardly be so obstinate as that," said the bishop.

"I'm afraid you don't know him, my lord," said the lawyer. The bishop, thinking of the scene which had taken place in that very room only yesterday, felt that he did know Mr. Crawley, and felt also that the hope which he had just expressed was one in which he himself put no trust. But something might turn up; and it was devoutly to be

hoped that Dr. Tempest would take a long time over his inquiry. The assizes might come on as soon as it was terminated, or very shortly afterwards; and then everything might be well. "You won't find Dr. Tempest very ready at it," said Mr. Chadwick. The bishop in his heart was comforted by the words. "But he must be made to be ready to do his duty," said Mrs. Proudie, imperiously. Mr. Chadwick shrugged his shoulders, then got up, spoke his farewell little speeches, and left the palace.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LILY DALE WRITES TWO WORDS IN HER BOOK.

John Eames saw nothing more of Lily Dale till he packed up his portmanteau, left his mother's house, and went to stay for a few days with his old friend Lady Julia; and this did not happen till he had been above a week at Guestwick. Mrs. Dale repeatedly said that it was odd that Johnny did not come to see them; and Grace, speaking of him to Lily, asked why he did not come. Lily, in her funny way, declared that he would come soon enough. But even while she was joking there was something of half-expressed consciousness in her words,—as though she felt it to be foolish to speak of his coming as she might of that of any other young man, before people who knew her whole story. "He'll come quick enough. He knows, and I know, that his coming will do no good. Of course I shall be glad to see him. Why shouldn't I be glad to see him? I've known him and liked him all my life. I liked him when there did not seem to be much about him to like, and now that he is clever, and agreeable, and good-looking,—which he never was as a lad,—why shouldn't I go on liking him? He's more like a brother to me than anybody else I've got. James,"—James was her brother-in-law, Dr. Crofts,—"thinks of nothing but his patients and his babies, and my cousin Bernard is much too grand a person for me to take the liberty of loving him. I shall be very glad to see Johnny Eames." From all which Mrs. Dale was led to believe that Johnny's case was still hopeless. And how should it not be hopeless? Had Lily not confessed within the last week or two that she still loved Adolphus Crosbie?

Mrs. Eames also, and Mary, were surprised that John did not go over to Allington. "You haven't seen Mrs. Dale yet, or the squire?" said his mother.

"I shall see them when I am at the cottage."

"Yes;—no doubt. But it seems strange that you should be here so long without going to them."

"There's time enough," said he. "I shall have nothing else to do when I'm at the cottage." Then, when Mary had spoken to him again in private, expressing a hope that there was "nothing wrong," he had been very angry with his sister. "What do you mean by wrong? What rubbish you girls talk! and you never have any delicacy of feeling to make you silent."

"Oh, John, don't say such hard things as that of me!"

"But I do say them. You'll make me swear among you some day that I will never see Lily Dale again. As it is, I wish I never had seen her,—simply because I am so dunned about it." In all of which I think that Johnny was manifestly wrong. When the humour was on him he was fond enough of talking about Lily Dale. Had he not taught her to do so, I doubt whether his sister would ever have mentioned Lily's name to him. "I did not mean to dun you, John," said Mary, meekly.

But at last he went to Lady Julia's, and was no sooner there than he was ready to start for Allington. When Lady Julia spoke to him about Lily, he did not venture to snub her. Indeed, of all his friends, Lady Julia was the one with whom on this subject he allowed himself the most unrestricted confidence. He came over one day, just before dinner, and declared his intention of walking over to Allington immediately after breakfast on the following morning. "It's the last time, Lady Julia," he said.

"So you say, Johnny."

"And so I mean it! What's the good of a man frittering away his life? What's the good of wishing for what you can't get?"

"Jacob was not in such a hurry when he wished for Rachel."

"That was all very well for an old patriarch who had seven or eight hundred years to live."

"My dear John, you forget your Bible. Jacob did not live half as long as that."

"He lived long enough, and slowly enough, to be able to wait fourteen years;—and then he had something to comfort him in the meantime. And after all, Lady Julia, it's more than seven years since I first thought Lily was the prettiest girl I ever saw."

"How old are you now?"

"Twenty-seven,—and she's twenty-four."

"You've time enough yet, if you'll only be patient."

"I'll be patient for to-morrow, Lady Julia, but never again. Not that I mean to quarrel with her. I'm not such a fool as to quarrel with a girl because she can't like me. I know how it all is. If that scoundrel had not come across my path just when he did,—in that very nick of time, all might have been right betwixt her and me. I couldn't have offered to marry her before, when I hadn't as much income as would have found her in bread-and-butter. And then, just as better times came to me, he stepped in! I wonder whether it will be expected of me that I should forgive him?"

"As far as that goes, you have no right to be angry with him."

"But I am,—all the same."

"And so was I,—but not for stepping in, as you call it."

"You and I are different, Lady Julia. I was angry with him for stepping in; but I couldn't show it. Then he stepped out, and I did manage to show it. And now I shouldn't wonder if he doesn't step in again. After all, why should he have such a power? It was simply the nick of time which gave it to him." That John Eames should be able to find some consolation in this consideration is devoutly to be hoped by us all.

There was nothing said about Lily Dale the next morning at breakfast. Lady Julia observed that John was dressed a little more neatly than usual;—though the change was not such as to have called for her special observation, had she not known the business on which he was intent.

"You have nothing to send to the Dales?" he said, as he got up from the table.

"Nothing but my love, Johnny."

"No worsted or embroidery work,—or a pot of special jam for the squire?"

"No, sir, nothing; though I should like to make you carry a pair of panniers, if I could."

"They would become me well," said Johnny, "for I am going on an ass's errand." Then, without waiting for the word of affection which was on the old woman's lips, he got himself out of the room, and started on his journey.

The walk was only three miles and the weather was dry and frosty, and he had come to the turn leading up to the church and the squire's house almost before he remembered that he was near Allington. Here he paused for a moment to think. If he continued his way down by the "Red Lion" and through Allington Street, he must knock at Mrs. Dale's door, and ask for admission by means of the servant,—as

would be done by any ordinary visitor. But he could make his way on to the lawn by going up beyond the wall of the churchyard and through the squire's garden. He knew the path well,—very well; and he thought that he might take so much liberty as that, both with the squire and with Mrs. Dale, although his visits to Allington were not so frequent now as they used to be in the days of his boyhood. He did not wish to be admitted by the servant, and therefore he went through the gardens. Luckily he did not see the squire, who would have detained him, and he escaped from Hopkins, the old gardener, with little more than a word. "I'm going down to see the ladies, Hopkins; I suppose I shall find them?" And then, while Hopkins was arranging his spade so that he might lean upon it for a little chat, Johnny was gone and had made his way into the other garden. He had thought it possible that he might meet Lily out among the walks by herself, and such a meeting as this would have suited him better than any other. And as he crossed the little bridge which separated the gardens he thought of more than one such meeting,—of one especial occasion on which he had first ventured to tell her in plain words that he loved her. But before that day Crosbie had come there, and at the moment in which he was speaking of his love she regarded Crosbie as an angel of light upon the earth. What hope could there have been for him then? What use was there in his telling such a tale of love at that time? When he told it, he knew that Crosbie had been before him. He knew that Crosbie was at that moment the angel of light. But as he had never before been able to speak of his love, so was he then unable not to speak of it. He had spoken, and of course had been simply rebuked. Since that day Crosbie had ceased to be an angel of light, and he, John Eames, had spoken often. But he had spoken in vain, and now he would speak once again.

He went through the garden and over the lawn belonging to the Small House and saw no one. He forgot, I think, that ladies do not come out to pick roses when the ground is frozen, and that croquet is not often in progress with the hoar-frost on the grass. So he walked up to the little terrace before the drawing-room, and looking in saw Mrs. Dale, and Lily, and Grace at their morning work. Lily was drawing, and Mrs. Dale was writing, and Grace had her needle in her hand. As it happened, no one at first perceived him, and he had time to feel that after all he would have managed better if he had been announced in the usual way. As, however, it was now necessary that he should announce himself, he knocked at the window, and they all immediately looked up and saw him. "It's my cousin John," said

Grace. "Oh, Johnny, how are you at last?" said Mrs. Dale. But it was Lily who, without speaking, opened the window for him, who was the first to give him her hand, and who led him through into the room.

"It's a great shame my coming in this way," said John, "and letting all the cold air in upon you."

"We shall survive it," said Mrs. Dale. "I suppose you have just come down from my brother-in-law?"

"No; I have not seen the squire as yet. I will do so before I go back, of course. But it seemed such a commonplace sort of thing to go round by the village."

"We are very glad to see you, by whatever way you come;—are we not, mamma?" said Lily.

"I'm not so sure of that. We were only saying yesterday that as you had been in the country a fortnight without coming to us, we did not think we would be at home when you did come."

"But I have caught you, you see," said Johnny.

And so they went on, chatting of old times and of mutual friends very comfortably for full an hour. And there was some serious conversation about Grace's father and his affairs, and John declared his opinion that Mr. Crawley ought to go to his uncle, Thomas Toogood, not at all knowing at that time that Mr. Crawley himself had come to the same opinion. And John gave them an elaborate description of Sir Raffle Buffle, standing up with his back to the fire with his hat on his head, and speaking with a loud harsh voice, to show them the way in which he declared that that gentleman received his inferiors; and then bowing and scraping and rubbing his hands together and simpering with would-be softness,—declaring that after that fashion Sir Raffle received his superiors. And they were very merry,—so that no one would have thought that Johnny was a despondent lover, now bent on throwing the dice for his last stake; or that Lily was aware that she was in the presence of one lover, and that she was like to fall to the ground between two stools,—having two lovers, neither of whom could serve her turn.

"How can you consent to serve him if he's such a man as that?" said Lily, speaking of Sir Raffle.

"I do not serve him. I serve the Queen,—or rather the public. I don't take his wages, and he does not play his tricks with me. He knows that he can't. He has tried it, and has failed. And he only keeps me where I am because I've had some money left me. He thinks it fine to have a private secretary with a fortune. I know that he tells

people all manner of lies about it, making it out to be five times as much as it is. Dear old Huffle Snuffle. He is such an ass; and yet he's had wit enough to get to the top of the tree, and to keep himself there. He began the world without a penny. Now he has got a handle to his name, and he'll live in clover all his life. It's very odd, isn't it, Mrs. Dale?"

"I suppose he does his work?"

"When men get so high as that, there's no knowing whether they work or whether they don't. There isn't much for them to do, as far as I can see. They have to look beautiful, and frighten the young ones."

"And does Sir Raffle look beautiful?" Lily asked.

"After a fashion, he does. There is something imposing about such a man till you're used to it, and can see through it. Of course it's all padding. There are men who work, no doubt. But among the bigwigs, and bishops and cabinet ministers, I fancy that the looking beautiful is the chief part of it. Dear me, you don't mean to say it's luncheon time?"

But it was luncheon time, and not only had he not as yet said a word of all that which he had come to say, but had not as yet made any move towards getting it said. How was he to arrange that Lily should be left alone with him? Lady Julia had said that she should not expect him back till dinner-time, and he had answered her lackadaisically, "I don't suppose I shall be there above ten minutes. Ten minutes will say all I've got to say, and do all I've got to do. And then I suppose I shall go and cut names about upon bridges,—eh, Lady Julia?" Lady Julia understood his words; for once, upon a former occasion, she had found him cutting Lily's name on the rail of a wooden bridge in her brother's grounds. But he had now been a couple of hours at the Small House, and had not said a word of that which he had come to say.

"Are you going to walk out with us after lunch?" said Lily.

"He will have had walking enough," said Mrs. Dale.

"We'll convoy him back part of the way," said Lily.

"I'm not going yet," said Johnny, "unless you turn me out."

"But we must have our walk before it is dark," said Lily.

"You might go up with him to your uncle," said Mrs. Dale. "Indeed, I promised to go up myself, and so did you, Grace, to see the microscope. I heard Mr. Dale give orders that one of those long-legged reptiles should be caught on purpose for your inspection."

Mrs. Dale's little scheme for bringing the two together was very transparent, but it was not the less wise on that account. Schemes

will often be successful, let them be ever so transparent. Little intrigues become necessary, not to conquer unwilling people, but people who are willing enough, who, nevertheless, cannot give way except under the machinations of an intrigue.

"I don't think I'll mind looking at the long-legged creature to-day," said Johnny.

"I must go, of course," said Grace.

Lily said nothing at the moment, either about the long-legged creature or the walk. That which must be, must be. She knew well why John Eames had come there. She knew that the visits to his mother and to Lady Julia would never have been made, but that he might have this interview. And he had a right to demand, at any rate, as much as that. That which must be, must be. And therefore when both Mrs. Dale and Grace stoutly maintained their purpose of going up to the squire, Lily neither attempted to persuade John to accompany them, nor said that she would do so herself.

"I will convoy you home myself," she said, "and Grace, when she has done with the beetle, shall come and meet me. Won't you, Grace?"

"Certainly."

"We are not helpless young ladies in these parts, nor yet timorous," continued Lily. "We can walk about without being afraid of ghosts, robbers, wild bulls, young men, or gipsies. Come the field path, Grace. I will go as far as the big oak with him, and then I shall turn back, and I shall come in by the stile opposite the church gate, and through the garden. So you can't miss me."

"I daresay he'll come back with you," said Grace.

"No, he won't. He will do nothing of the kind. He'll have to go on and open Lady Julia's bottle of port wine for his own drinking."

All this was very good on Lily's 'part, and very good also on the part of Mrs. Dale; and John was of course very much obliged to them. But there was a lack of romance in it all, which did not seem to him to argue well as to his success. He did not think much about it, but he felt that Lily would not have been so ready to arrange their walk had she intended to yield to his entreaty. No doubt in these latter days plain good sense had become the prevailing mark of her character, —perhaps, as Johnny thought, a little too strongly prevailing; but even with all her plain good sense and determination to dispense with the absurdities of romance in the affairs of her life, she would not have proposed herself as his companion for a walk across the fields merely that she might have an opportunity of accepting his hand. He did not

say all this to himself, but he instinctively felt that it was so. And he felt also that it should have been his duty to arrange the walk, or the proper opportunity for the scene that was to come. She had done it instead,—she and her mother between them, thereby forcing upon him a painful conviction that he himself had not been equal to the occasion. "I always make a mull of it," he said to himself, when the girls went up to get their hats.

They went down together through the garden, and parted where the paths led away, one to the great house and the other towards the church. "I'll certainly come and call upon the squire before I go back to London," said Johnny.

"We'll tell him so," said Mrs. Dale. "He would be sure to hear that you had been with us, even if we said nothing about it."

"Of course he would," said Lily; "Hopkins has seen him." Then they separated, and Lily and John Eames were together.

Hardly a word was said, perhaps not a word, till they had crossed the road and got into the field opposite to the church. And in this first field there was more than one path, and the children of the village were often there, and it had about it something of a public nature. John Eames felt that it was by no means a fitting field to say that which he had to say. In crossing it, therefore, he merely remarked that the day was very fine for walking. Then he added one special word, "And it is so good of you, Lily, to come with me."

"I am very glad to come with you. I would do more than that, John, to show how glad I am to see you." Then they had come to the second little gate, and beyond that the fields were really fields, and there were stiles instead of wicket-gates, and the business of the day must be begun.

"Lily, whenever I come here you say you are glad to see me?"

"And so I am,—very glad. Only you would take it as meaning what it does not mean, I would tell you, that of all my friends living away from the reach of my daily life, you are the one whose coming is ever the most pleasant to me."

"Oh, Lily!"

"It was, I think, only yesterday that I was telling Grace that you are more like a brother to me than any one else. I wish it might be so. I wish we might swear to be brother and sister. I'd do more for you then than walk across the fields with you to Guestwick Cottage. Your prosperity would then be the thing in the world for which I should be most anxious. And if you should marry——"

"It can never be like that between us," said Johnny.

"Can it not? I think it can. Perhaps not this year, or next year; perhaps not in the next five years. But I make myself happy with thinking that it may be so some day. I shall wait for it patiently, very patiently, even though you should rebuff me again and again,—as you have done now."

"I have not rebuffed you."

"Not maliciously, or injuriously, or offensively. I will be very patient, and take little rebuffs without complaining. This is the worst stile of all. When Grace and I are here together we can never manage it without tearing ourselves all to pieces. It is much nicer to have you to help me."

"Let me help you always," he said, keeping her hands in his after he had aided her to jump from the stile to the ground.

"Yes, as my brother."

"That is nonsense, Lily."

"Is it nonsense? Nonsense is a hard word."

"It is nonsense as coming from you to me. Lily, I sometimes think that I am persecuting you, writing to you, coming after you, as I am doing now,—telling the same whining story,—asking, asking, and asking for that which you say you will never give me. And then I feel ashamed of myself, and swear that I will do it no more.

"Do not be ashamed of yourself; but yet do it no more."

"And then," he continued, without minding her words, "at other times I feel that it must be my own fault; that if I only persevered with sufficient energy I must be successful. At such times I swear that I will never give it up."

"Oh, John, if you could only know how little worthy of such pursuit it is."

"Leave me to judge of that, dear. When a man has taken a month, or perhaps only a week, or perhaps not more than half an hour, to make up his mind, it may be very well to tell him that he doesn't know what he is about. I've been in the office now for over seven years, and the first day I went I put an oath into a book that I would come back and get you for my wife when I had got enough to live upon."

"Did you, John?"

"Yes. I can show it you. I used to come and hover about the place in the old days, before I went to London, when I was such a fool that I couldn't speak to you if I met you. I am speaking of a time long before,—before that man came down here."

"Do not speak of him, Johnny."

"I must speak of him. A man isn't to hold his tongue when every-

thing he has in the world is at stake. I suppose he loved you after a fashion, once."

"Pray, pray do not speak ill of him."

"I am not going to abuse him. You can judge of him by his deeds. I cannot say anything worse of him than what they say. I suppose he loved you; but he certainly did not love you as I have done. I have at any rate been true to you. Yes, Lily, I have been true to you. I am true to you. He did not know what he was about. I do. I am justified in saying that I do. I want you to be my wife. It is no use your talking about it as though I only half wanted it."

"I did not say that."

"Is not a man to have any reward? Of course if you had married him there would have been an end of it. He had come in between me and my happiness, and I must have borne it, as other men bear such sorrows. But you have not married him; and, of course, I cannot but feel that I may yet have a chance. Lily, answer me this. Do you believe that I love you?" But she did not answer him. "You can at any rate tell me that. Do you think that I am in earnest?"

"Yes, I think you are in earnest."

"And do you believe that I love you with all my heart and all my strength and all my soul?"

"Oh, John!"

"But do you?"

"I think you love me."

"Think! what am I to say or to do to make you understand that my only idea of happiness is the idea that sooner or later I may get you to be my wife? Lily, will you say that it shall be so? Speak, Lily. There is no one that will not be glad. Your uncle will consent, —has consented. Your mother wishes it. Bell wishes it. My mother wishes it. Lady Julia wishes it. You would be doing what everybody about you wants you to do. And why should you not do it? It isn't that you dislike me. You wouldn't talk about being my sister, if you had not some sort of regard for me."

"I have a regard for you."

"Then why will you not be my wife? Oh, Lily, say the word now, here, at once. Say the word, and you'll make me the happiest fellow in all England." As he spoke he took her by both arms, and held her fast. She did not struggle to get away from him, but stood quite still, looking into his face, while the first sparkle of a salt tear formed itself in each eye. "Lily, one little word will do it,—half a

word, a nod, a smile. Just touch my arm with your hand and I will take it for a yes." I think that she almost tried to touch him; that the word was in her throat, and that she almost strove to speak it. But there was no syllable spoken, and her fingers did not loose themselves to fall upon his sleeve. "Lily, Lily, what can I say to you?"

"I wish I could," she whispered;—but the whisper was so hoarse that he hardly recognized the voice.

"And why can you not? What is there to hinder you? There is nothing to hinder you, Lily."

"Yes, John; there is that which must hinder me."

"And what is it?"

"I will tell you. You are so good and so true, and so excellent,—such a dear, dear, dear friend, that I will tell you everything, so that you may read my heart. I will tell you as I tell mamma,—you and her and no one else;—for you are the choice friend of my heart. I cannot be your wife because of the love I bear for another man."

"And that man is he,—he who came here?"

"Of course it is he. I think, Johnny, you and I are alike in this, that when we have loved we cannot bring ourselves to change. You will not change, though it would be so much better you should do so."

"No; I will never change."

"Nor can I. When I sleep I dream of him. When I am alone I cannot banish him from my thoughts. I cannot define what it is to love him. I want nothing from him,—nothing, nothing. But I move about through my little world thinking of him, and I shall do so to the end. I used to feel proud of my love, though it made me so wretched that I thought it would kill me. I am not proud of it any longer. It is a foolish poor-spirited weakness,—as though my heart had been only half formed in the making. Do you be stronger, John. A man should be stronger than a woman."

"I have none of that sort of strength."

"Nor have I. What can we do but pity each other, and swear that we will be friends,—dear friends. There is the oak-tree and I have got to turn back. We have said everything that we can say,—unless you will tell me that you will be my brother."

"No; I will not tell you that."

"Good-by, then, Johnny."

He paused, holding her by the hand and thinking of another question which he longed to put to her,—considering whether he would ask her that question or not. He hardly knew whether he were entitled to ask

it;—whether or no the asking of it would be ungenerous. She had said that she would tell him everything,—as she had told everything to her mother. "Of course," he said, "I have no right to expect to know anything of your future intentions?"

"You may know them all,—as far as I know them myself. I have said that you should read my heart."

"If this man, whose name I cannot bear to mention, should come again——"

"If he were to come again he would come in vain, John." She did not say that he had come again. She could tell her own secret, but not that of another person.

"You would not marry him, now that he is free?"

She stood and thought a while before she answered him. "No, I should not marry him now. I think not." Then she paused again. "Nay, I am sure I would not. After what has passed I could not trust myself to do it. There is my hand on it. I will not."

"No, Lily, I do not want that."

"But I insist. I will not marry Mr. Crosbie. But you must not misunderstand me, John. There;—all that is over for me now. All those dreams about love, and marriage, and of a house of my own, and children,—and a cross husband, and a wedding-ring growing always tighter as I grow fatter and older. I have dreamed of such things as other girls do,—more perhaps than other girls, more than I should have done. And now I accept the thing as finished. You wrote something in your book, you dear John,—something that could not be made to come true. Dear John, I wish for your sake it was otherwise. I will go home and I will write in my book, this very day, Lilian Dale, Old Maid. If ever I make that false, do you come and ask me for the page."

"Let it remain there till I am allowed to tear it out."

"I will write it, and it shall never be torn out. You I cannot marry. Him I will not marry. You may believe me, Johnny, when I say there can never be a third."

"And is that to be the end of it?"

"Yes;—that is to be the end of it. Not the end of our friendship. Old maids have friends."

"It shall not be the end of it. There shall be no end of it with me."

"But, John——"

"Do not suppose that I will trouble you again,—at any rate not for a while. In five years time perhaps,——"

"Now, Johnny, you are laughing at me. And of course it is the best way. If there is not Grace, and she has caught me before I have turned back. Good-by, dear, dear John. God bless you. I think you the finest fellow there is in the world. I do, and so does mamma. Remember always that there is a temple at Allington in which your worship is never forgotten." Then she pressed his hand and turned away from him to meet Grace Crawley. John did not stop to speak a word to his cousin, but pursued his way alone.

"That cousin of yours," said Lily, "is simply the dearest, warmest-hearted, finest creature that ever was seen in the shape of a man."

"Have you told him that you think him so?" said Grace.

"Indeed, I have," said Lily.

"But have you told this finest, warmest, dearest creature that he shall be rewarded with the prize he covets?"

"No, Grace. I have told him nothing of the kind. I think he understands it all now. If he does not, it is not for the want of my telling him. I don't suppose any lady was ever more open-spoken to a gentleman than I have been to him."

"And why have you sent him away disappointed? You know you love him."

"You see, my dear," said Lily, "you allow yourself, for the sake of your argument, to use a word in a double sense, and you attempt to confound me by doing so. But I am a great deal too clever for you, and have thought too much about it, to be taken in in that way. I certainly love your cousin John; and so I do love Mr. Boyce, the vicar."

"You love Johnny much better than you do Mr. Boyce."

"True; very much better; but it is the same sort of love. However, it is a great deal too deep for you to understand. You're too young, and I shan't try to explain it. But the long and the short of it is,—I am not going to marry your cousin."

"I wish you were," said Grace, "with all my heart."

John Eames as he returned to the cottage was by no means able to fall back upon those resolutions as to his future life, which he had formed for himself and communicated to his friend Dalrymple, and which he had intended to bring at once into force in the event of his being again rejected by Lily Dale. "I will cleanse my mind of it altogether," he had said, "and though I may not forget her, I will live as though she were forgotten. If she declines my proposal again, I will accept her word as final. I will not go about the world any longer as a

stricken deer,—to be pitied or else bullied by the rest of the herd." On his way down to Guestwick he had sworn twenty times that it should be so. He would make one more effort, and then he would give it up. But now, after his interview with Lily, he was as little disposed to give it up as ever.

He sat upon a gate in a paddock through which there was a back entrance into Lady Julia's garden, and there swore a thousand oaths that he would never give her up. He was, at any rate, sure that she would never become the wife of any one else. He was equally sure that he would never become the husband of any other wife. He could trust her. Yes; he was sure of that. But could he trust himself? Communing with himself, he told himself that after all he was but a poor creature. Circumstances had been very good to him, but he had done nothing for himself. He was vain, and foolish, and unsteady. So he told himself while sitting upon the gate. But he had, at any rate, been constant to Lily, and constant he would remain.

He would never more mention her name to any one,—unless it were to Lady Julia to-night. To Dalrymple he would not open his mouth about her, but would plainly ask his friend to be silent on that subject if her name should be mentioned by him. But morning and evening he would pray for her, and in his prayers he would always think of her as his wife. He would never speak to another girl without remembering that he was bound to Lily. He would go nowhere into society without recalling to mind the fact that he was bound by the chains of a solemn engagement. If he knew himself he would be constant to Lily.

And then he considered in what manner it would be best and most becoming that he should still prosecute his endeavour and repeat his offer. He thought that he would write to her every year, on the same day of the year, year after year, it might be for the next twenty years. And his letters should be very simple. Sitting there on the gate he planned the wording of his letters;—of his first letter, and of his second, and of his third. They should be very like to each other,—should hardly be more than a repetition of the same words. "If now you are ready for me, then, Lily, am I, as ever, still ready for you." And then "if now" again, and again "if now;—and still if now." When his hair should be grey, and the wrinkles on his cheeks,—ay, though they should be on hers, he would still continue to tell her from year to year that he was ready to take her. Surely some day that "if now" would prevail. And should it never prevail, the merit of his constancy should be its own reward.

Such letters as those she would surely keep. Then he looked forward, down into the valley of coming years, and fancied her as she might sit reading them in the twilight of some long evening,—letters which had been written all in vain. He thought that he could look forward with some satisfaction towards the close of his own career, in having been the hero of such a love-story. At any rate, if such a story were to be his story, the melancholy attached to it should arise from no fault of his own. He would still press her to be his wife. And then as he remembered that he was only twenty-seven and that she was twenty-four, he began to marvel at the feeling of grey old age which had come upon him, and tried to make himself believe that he would have her yet before the bloom was off her cheek.

He went into the cottage and made his way at once into the room in which Lady Julia was sitting. She did not speak at first, but looked anxiously into his face. And he did not speak, but turned to a table near the window and took up a book,—though the room was too dark for him to see to read the words. "John," at last said Lady Julia.

"Well, my lady?"

"Have you nothing to tell me, John?"

"Nothing on earth,—except the same old story, which has now become a matter of course."

"But, John, will you not tell me what she has said?"

"Lady Julia, she has said no; simply no. It is a very easy word to say, and she has said it so often that it seems to come from her quite naturally." Then he got a candle and sat down over the fire with a volume of a novel. It was not yet past five, and Lady Julia did not go upstairs to dress till six, and therefore there was an hour during which they were together. John had at first been rather grand to his old friend, and very uncommunicative. But before the dressing bell had rung he had been coaxed into a confidential strain and had told everything. "I suppose it is wrong and selfish," he said. "I suppose I am a dog in a manger. But I do own that there is a consolation to me in the assurance that she will never be the wife of that scoundrel."

"I could never forgive her if she were to marry him now," said Lady Julia.

"I could never forgive him. But she has said that she will not, and I know that she will not forswear herself. I shall go on with it, Lady Julia. I have made up my mind to that. I suppose it will never come to anything, but I shall stick to it. I can live an old

bachelor as well as another man. At any rate I shall stick to it." Then the good silly old woman comforted him and applauded him as though he were a hero among men, and did reward him, as Lily had predicted, by one of those now rare bottles of superexcellent port which had come to her from her brother's cellar.

John Eames stayed out his time at the cottage, and went over more than once again to Allington, and called on the squire, on one occasion dining with him and meeting the three ladies from the Small House; and he walked with the girls, comporting himself like any ordinary man. But he was not again alone with Lily Dale, nor did he learn whether she had in truth written those two words in her book. But the reader may know that she did write them there on the evening of the day on which the promise was made. "Lilian Dale,—Old Maid."

And when John's holiday was over, he returned to his duties at the elbow of Sir Raffle Buffle.

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